

From: Tim Downs (tdowns@secucc.org)

To: michaelstroud@bellsouth.net;

Date: Fri, March 29, 2013 2:25:33 PM

Cc:

Subject: For everything there is a season! Come to the 2013 Annual Meeting

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Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. Don't forget to add tdowns@secucc.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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FEATURE FOCUS

For Everything There is a Season, and a Time for Every Matter Under Heaven



We're excited to announce the **2013 Annual Meeting** featuring keynote presentation by UCC General Minister and President Rev. Geoffrey Black in addition to worship leadership from Rev. Joyce Hollyday, Minister Dorinda Broadnax, and Rev. Dr. Dwight Andrews. First Congregational Church in Atlanta is graciously hosting the event in their newly renovated sanctuary. In addition to dynamic worship the meeting will provide several relevant workshops and panels geared toward enhancing ministry in

various contexts.

We will also gather as Conference to say a hearty farewell to our Conference Minister, Rev. Tim Downs, thanking him for his service as he enters retirement.

The final TAP Banquet and Commencement will take place on Thursday evening, June 13th at 6 pm. Rev. Kathy Clark will be guest speaking as we put a capstone on this vibrant ministry as it transitions into the PATHWAYS program.

Registration for the Annual Meeting will be open in the middle of April. Watch for details via email, twitter, and our website.

CELEBRATION

Kim Shelton, a member of Community Congregational UCC, Montgomery, **was ordained on March 23rd**, at Advocate United Church of Christ, Chicago, as an associate pastor.

John Gill, pastor of Church of the Savior UCC, Knoxville, **received a grant for his sabbatical study**, during which he will be studying the impact of long term pastorates.

Chris Lyman-Waldron, pastor of Praxis UCC, Atlanta, has been hired as the Director of Communications of the Southeast Conference. This is his first newsletter.

Tom Query, a member of Church of the Savior, Roswell, GA, and a pastoral counselor with the Wellspring Counseling Center was installed on February 24th in a four way covenant in his ministry.

The following ministers were each approved for transfer of ordained ministerial standing to the Southeast Conference: **Valerie Coe Lowder, Clara Benson, Rick Diekmann, and Kristen Barner**. Congratulations and welcome!

[Click here](#) to read the details of these joyous celebrations!

CONFERENCE NEWS

News from the Conference and Associations

The Southeast Conference is now on Twitter!

[Follow us @SECUCC](#) for up to the minute announcements of what's happening around the Conference.

CAMPAIGN FOR NEW AND RENEWING CONGREGATIONS TO KICK OFF AT GENERAL SYNOD

LIFTING UP



Pleasant Hill Community UCC has honored **Dr. Richard Braun** with a Memorial Concert on March 23rd. Dr. Braun, who passed away in December, was a medical missionary partnering with his wife Trudy in working with the United Church Board for World Ministries in Africa. He had a wonderful missionary career spanning three decades. Upon returning to Cumberland County, Tennessee he loved playing flute and participating in the music program at his church in Pleasant Hill. To read more about Dr. Braun and his life [click here](#).

We are saddened to receive news of the death of **Emmett Floyd**, who served as the **Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference** from July 1, 1980 until December 31, 1987 and also served as the Conference Minister of the Southern Conference. Remembered fondly as "the admiral", prior to serving in conference ministry, Emmett had served in the Navy as an admiral as well as serving as a new church start pastor as a Southern Baptist minister. In retirement, Rev. Floyd was an active interim serving a number of churches in times of pastoral transition. He was a beloved member of Elon Community UCC and the Eastern North Carolina Association. We send condolences to his wife, Katherine and family. [His obituary can be found here](#).

Leaders of the United Church of Christ have identified the development of new congregations as a vital missional and fundraising priority for the future of the church. To underscore that commitment, a kick-off fundraiser, **TESTIMONY!**, scheduled for General Synod 2013, begins a major campaign to raise \$1 million for church planting and renewal across the UCC. Two ministers from the Southeast Conference will be part of the plenary: Rev. Susannah Davis, pastor of Kirkwood UCC, and Rev. Cindy Andrews-Looper, pastor of Holy Trinity Community Church. Additionally, Rev. Elizabeth Clement will be one of the leaders of the campaign. At Synod's fund raiser luncheon, Rev. Dwight Andrews, pastor of First Congregational UCC in Atlanta, will be directing the music. It is good to have such broad SEC leadership as part of this campaign at General Synod. [Read more here.](#)

Renewing Pastors!

The Fund for Theological Education is sponsoring the **College of Local Pastors** a grant program for clergy renewal. They offer up to \$10,000 to cohorts of four to six clergy to find their own refreshment and reinvigoration. They are seeking ministers from the Southeast Conference to participate. The deadline for the next round is May 15. To find out more about this exciting program [click here.](#)

Dynamic Adult Education Resource

The Christian Century has recommended The Present Word the top selling adult education curriculum from UCC Resources. For more information [click here.](#)

Landmark Cultural Photographic Exhibit and Documentary Screening in Birmingham

The photographic exhibit "BESA, Muslims Who Saved Jews in World War II," is coming to Birmingham, March 5 - June 30 in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. In addition, a free screening of the documentary "BESA, the Promise" will be shown on April 18. BESA is an Albanian word meaning "faith" or "word of honor". An article about this event can be [found here.](#)

Immigration Issues Event

Lutheran Services of Georgia is inviting all SEC congregations to **"When Strangers Become Neighbors"** a program on immigration issues from a faith perspective on April 6. Southeastern Synod Bishop Julian Gordy is one of the main speakers. [More information can be found here.](#)

Mission 4/1 EARTH

We begin Mission 4/1 Earth this coming Monday! This initiative, which spans the 50 days of Pentecost, hopes to accomplish more than 1 million hours of engaged earth care, 100,000 tree plantings across the globe, and 100,000 advocacy letters written and sent on environmental concerns.

Kirkwood UCC was highlighted in this month's KYP (Keeping You Posted) for their pledge of 500 hours of earth care, planting 50 trees and writing 50 letters over the course of the 50 day event. Those are goals set by

AROUND the CONFERENCE

News from Our Local Churches

Holy Trinity Building Expansion



Holy Trinity Community UCC, Nashville, having successfully completed a capital campaign for \$1.7 million, and broken ground for a new worship space that will more than double their capacity, is looking forward to dedicating their sanctuary in October, 2013. Rev. Tim Downs recently visited the building site and captured this photo of their expansion progress. Rev. Cindy Andrews-Looper reports that the new sanctuary will be able to accommodate their vibrantly growing congregation of more than 350 members.

Rev. Tim Downs Preaches at UCC Pensacola

United Church of Christ Pensacola, established in December 2012, is worshipping with 60 members, and welcomed Conference Minister Tim Downs as their preacher on March 3rd.

UCC Awards Grant to Fuller Center Legacy Build

UCC's National Disaster Ministries has awarded a \$25,000 grant to the Fuller Center which will bring more than 200 volunteers to Atlantic City at the end of April in response to devastation in the wake of superstorm Sandy. Kirk Lyman-Barner, director of US Field Operations for the Fuller Center and member of the Southeast Conference and his team has been instrumental in putting together this event. He is also laying the groundwork for starting a new UCC congregation - Praxis UCC in Americus.

A Word from TIM DOWNS

Dear Friends,

As we approach Easter Sunday, my mind turns to the wonderful proclamation, "O death, where is your victory? Death where is your sting? Thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Sovereign Jesus Christ!"

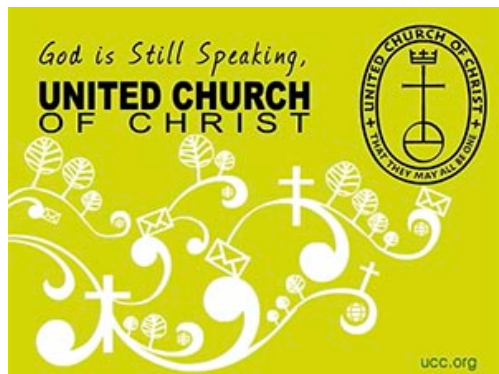
We are a people who celebrate the ways in which God moves through and in us to be signs of God's life and hope through our churches and in our world. As I continue my journey among you, I am deeply grateful for the ways in which we have partnered to be signs of God's life affirming and life giving power.



Rev. Susannah Davis's congregation of 80-100 members. You can see more of that story by [clicking here](#).

There are lots of [great resources on the national UCC website](#) including sermon seeds, liturgical materials, and a live counter to log planted trees, hours volunteered, and letters written.

Do you have stories that you want to share about the work you're doing with Mission 4/1 Earth? [Write the Conference and let us know](#).



Invitation to Mission 4/1 Earth from the United Church of Christ

Generosity Corner

**Transform Your Life-Transform the World
Here's How...Apply Now**



Transforming Churches-Transforming Lives, the Conference's Capital Campaign, is developing a strategic plan for funding the first programs in accordance with the Campaign's highest priorities. The campaign's pledged monies are \$614,000 to date. Please contact Debbie Spearman, Generosity Coordinator, if you would like to discuss a program or initiative from your church that needs funding.

Trend spotting: Mobile payments

About half of adults in the US own a smartphone and a whopping 28% of Americans use a mobile device as

Two weeks ago I was invited to lead a closing worship moment with my colleagues in the Council of Conference Ministers. This was the last time I would be with them before my retirement.

I began by sharing that when I began in conference ministry I was invited to offer a reflection to the Council of Conference Ministers. I had put together an altar on which I had arranged symbols of the Southeast Conference and its legacy. There was a red altar cloth, symbolizing the blood of the martyrs, black and white who had given their lives to build the 500 schools and 200 churches to serve the recently emancipated slaves. These schools were built and staffed largely by women who wanted to make the same sacrifice on behalf of "truth and light" that their brothers had made on the battlefields of the Civil War for freedom. Many of them did make those sacrifices in full. There was a cotton plant heavy with bolls which I had uprooted on an Alabama roadside, representing the sweat and labor of slaves, and later of tenant farmers, both black and white. There was a copy of a letter written by the deacons of First Congregational Church, Atlanta, to President Woodrow Wilson in 1913 urging him to support federal anti-lynching legislation, which he did not, symbolizing our long history of advocacy on behalf of the marginalized and disenfranchised. I ended the introduction to this altar by saying that while it might appear to be a lonely ministry to be called to serve in the South on behalf of the United Church of Christ, I have never felt alone because I, and we as a conference, have been surrounded by supporters and colleagues who share our call to be signs of God's triumph over death and despair.

I have never felt alone in this ministry. Of course I have had "the light of God's divine promises to comfort me". But also I, and we together, have been surrounded by a network of covenants that have bound us as a conference with other conferences and with the national setting of the church. I have served with an exceptional staff over these 17 years, and colleagues in local churches across the conference who love the UCC as fiercely as I do. Other conferences have been generous with financial support, prayers, and presence. The national setting has provided us tremendous support financially and other resources that have been essential to our growth and vitality. I took time in the meeting to thank national staff and my colleagues for all that they have given to us.

I reminded my colleagues in conference ministry that they as I are involved daily in ministries that are literally making the difference between life and death. I told the story of attending a new church start that was LGBTQ and African-American early in my ministry here. A young man stood up during the opening testimony, and said through his tears; "thank you for building a church which is the first one in which I have worshipped and have not been called names from the pulpit." That man's testimony has been with me each step of my journey with you reminding me that we have a ministry together that makes a life and death difference in the lives of so many.

I celebrated that we are a united/uniting church, one in which we understand that the unity we know in Christ is greater than any of those things that divide us. While some think of inclusivity or unity as always leaning to the left in the United Church of Christ, I note that unity and inclusivity form a 360 degree circle. Thus my greatest sadness in my time in the Southeast was the effective loss of the East Alabama-West Georgia Association following General Synod in 2005. With the exit of most of their churches, we lost friends and colleagues who had through the years been close to me and to many of us. At our best we are a people who make clear that the table is a table for all.

We are an Easter people, who know that "death will have no dominion" and that "there is nothing that can separate us from Christ Jesus our Lord". I believe that this spirit is embedded in our history, in our ministry today, and in our future.

their primary way to access the Internet. So, for a church looking to reach out to more donors, a mobile option makes a lot of sense.

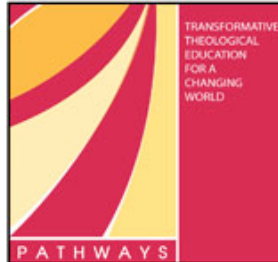
Peace,

Tim Downs



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Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ



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